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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: Media Reaction: GWOT: London Bombings, Central
Asia; Dhaka

Summary: Commenting on anti-terrorism measures taken by the
British administration, editorials say that civil liberty is
the first casualty.

Islamic "Naya Diganta" says that Central Asia is turning
into a playground of competing alliances.

[1](#)1. GWOT: London Bombings

"Ghost of Terror on Blair's shoulder"
Pro-government Bangla language newspaper "Amar Desh"
editorially comments (8/7):

Britain is now seeing the specter of terrorism. The Last
vestiges of human rights and liberalism are being eliminated
with measures taken by the British administration. British
Prime Minister Tony Blair has threatened to make British
laws tougher. He said, "Rules of game are changing."

What an irony that George Orwell's Britain is going to be a
country of Big Brother. Orwell's real name was Arthur Blair.
Satirist Blair's fear is going to be materialized in another
Blair, the British Prime Minister. Not only Asians and
Muslims will be the victims, one day the British people will
be subjected to "Big Brother's Watch." The McCarthyism of
the fifties has left behind an example.

"Britain's new approach: Liberal traditions the victim"
Independent English language newspaper "Daily Star"
editorially comments (8/7):

It is a sad day for the UK and for the rest of us as well
when Prime Minister Tony Blair unveils a series of proposals
intended to counter terrorism in the country, but which go
decidedly against the grain of the great tradition of
British liberalism.

The UK has long been known for its liberal and humane
approach to those who are stalked by fear of oppression and
persecution in their home countries aside from welcoming
immigrants in general. For centuries, the UK has been a
shining example for the world when it came to being the last
refuge of those seeking asylum. Of all of the European
countries, the UK was the one that had done the best job of
creating a thriving, vibrant multi-racial and multicultural
society.

We would thus like to raise a word of caution that the
proposed measures not be enacted until after deep
deliberation on the physical and psychological impact they
are likely to have.

And while the British authorities have acted in an exemplary
manner so far, we would like to also sound the warning that
they must continue to keep distinct Muslims as a whole from
the fractional minority who would commit acts of terror.

The specter of terrorism has created a dilemma for free
societies the world over: how to protect one's citizens and
at the same time safeguard civil liberties and liberalism.
This is a global problem, not just one the British are
facing. The real tragedy is that it seems as though the axe
is falling on liberalism everywhere.

We are all diminished today, but we must strive to recover
the status quo-ante of sanity as nearly as possible.
Liberalism must triumph.

"The British Backlash"
Independent English language newspaper "Bangladesh Observer"
editorially comments (8/7):
Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair has announced that he is
planning to refuse asylum to people who have links with
terrorism and also deport people who incite violence.
Theoretically, there is nothing wrong with taking action
against people who are a party to violence either in the UK
or abroad. But there is apprehension that the new drive may
be used rather sweepingly against all asylum-seekers and
minorities.

While most Britons feels that it is the unjust occupation of Iraq that has propelled the young Britons to die for a more just world Mr. Blair is looking the other way --- across the Atlantic for inspiration. If he is taking a cue from his ally George Bush he will be committing another blunder. Curtailing of civil liberties as suggested by General Parvez Musharaff of Pakistan is no solution. It will only make Britain more like the General's country. Blair surely doesn't want that. The British Prime minister must understand, however tragic the London bombings, there can be no solution without understanding the reasons that create the problem in the first place.

Central Asia

"Anti-Americanism in Central Asia"

An editorial page article in Islamic Bangla language newspaper "Naya Diganta" opines (8/7):

Recently two remarkable incidents occurred in the international arena. One is the Russia-China joint declaration and the Kazakhstan conference of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). These two incidents show that many leaders of the world are no longer tolerating the big brotherly attitude of the U.S. For this reason, a new anti-American alliance is being formed to resist the unipolar global system of the U.S....

In mid July, the SCO said that a timetable must be announced to end the American military presence in Central Asia. The active phase of the campaign against terrorism has ended in Afghanistan. Therefore, member states believe that it has become necessary for them to announce a deadline for the withdrawal of military presence and infrastructure from these countries.

After 9/11, the U.S. established a military base in Kyrgyzstan to launch aggression on Afghanistan. U.S. military officials have repeatedly said that they want to stay in Central Asia. On the other hand, the SCO demands the withdrawal of the U.S. base from Central Asia. That means it wants take charge of the security of the region.

The U.S. is also trying to form an alternative alliance in Central Asia under the program of the U.S.-Caspian Guard. Its objective is to guard the Baku-Tblisi-Chaihan oil pipeline. Under the program, U.S. troops will be deployed in the Caspian region and a defense alliance will be formed involving Azerbaijan, Georgia, some Central Asian states and Turkey. Russia and China will be kept outside the alliance. A game is being played in Central Asia. Is the U.S. going to be beaten in the game? If that happens, the madness of the U.S. will be partly responsible for that.

Chammas#